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Case Study on Effective Communication Through Email To Augment Face-To-Face Interaction in the Workforce

Jennifer Leigh Mills

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Jennifer Leigh Mills entitled "Case Study on Effective Communication Through Email To Augment Face-To-Face Interaction in the Workforce." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Human Resource Management.

Virginia Kupritz, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

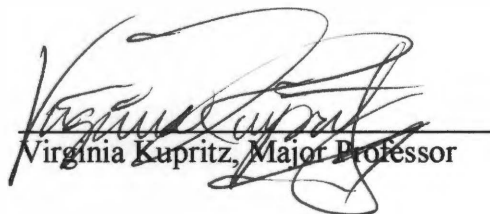
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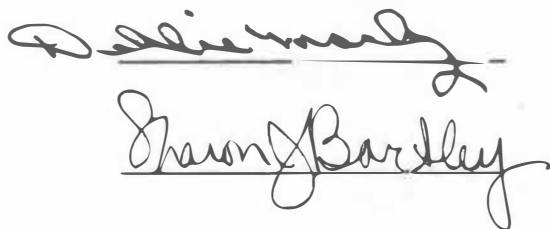
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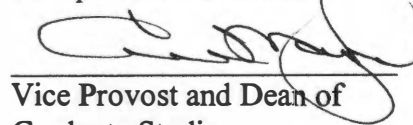
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We have read this thesis
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**Case Study on Effective
Communication Through Email To
Augment Face-To-Face Interaction
in the Workforce**

**A Thesis Presented for the Master of Science Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Jennifer Mills
May 2003**

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents

Marvin Mills

and

Carolyn Mills

who have given me educational opportunities
that are invaluable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of this study, I have not only gained knowledge in my field of study but also have learned life lessons in persistence and dedication. I would like to thank my committee Dr. Virginia Kupritz, Dr. Sharon Bartley and Dr. Debbie Mackey for their enthusiasm and support. The journey through graduate school has been both challenging and rewarding beyond all my expectations. I started down this academic road three years ago as very different person. Through the twists and turns of life and career I realize just what an accomplishment it is to come to the end of this road. I want to express my deepest thanks to Dr. Virginia Kupritz who shared her passion for learning with me and saw me through all the bumps and rough spots. I never would have made it to the end without her. Thank you, Dr. K, for helping me reach a place where I am filled with pride and a sense of true accomplishment.

ABSTRACT

The presented study focused on the type of information workers receive from managers and the work circumstances in which face-to-face contact is critical or work circumstances in which email is critical. Interviews were conducted with 24 office workers in a bank. Office workers identified work situations involving Human Resource confidential issues as being a critical face-to-face communication situation. Office workers also identified times involving security (safety) issues when it was critical to receive information through email.

Implications of this study indicate organizations need to utilize both face-to-face and electronic communication. Managers must determine the content of the message to be sent to workers and then determine the most productive mode of communication. Does the message contain private or sensitive information or is the message about updates or policy? Evaluating the different modes of communication, determining the type of information that is communicated to workers and communicating with workers using the appropriate mode will impact organizations in the future.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This study examines the type of information management can communicate effectively with workers through email in lieu of face-to-face contact and when face-to-face contact is critical for management to effectively communicate with workers. No matter the job type or the level held within an organization, *communication* is a critical tool used consciously and unconsciously by all human beings. Communication appears relatively easy and takes little skill; however, effective communication is a complex entity.

Alfred G. Smith (1966) defined effective communication as “the success with which the meaning conveyed to the receiver leads to the desired conduct of his part” (p. 16). *Contextual cues* play a significant role in the perceived intent of the message. A message is not merely a grouping of words but also the tone, familiarity involved, feedback and a variety of other non-verbal cues. The best example of someone using all contextual clues effectively is that of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s character Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes was famous for knowing how to make the most of all aspects of communication including recognition of non-verbal cues and extracting the maximum from observations (Hall, 1973). Managers and workers are no different from Sherlock Holmes. Each day both groups are surrounded by the mystery of interpreting messages, deciphering what is hidden within messages and determining how to respond to received messages.

Statement of the Problem

The ability to work and communicate in a *virtual* world has been a dynamic catalyst leveraging the workforce in space and time. This leverage has allowed companies to bring together a virtual workforce that cuts across departmental boundaries and includes those who are geographically dispersed, both in the United States and abroad. With this virtual work environment, communication can suffer because important contextual cues needed to communicate meaning are missing. If face-to-face contact provides important contextual cues for interpreting and prioritizing information to communicate meaning, then it stands to reason that the greater the uncertainty there is about the meaning and importance of information, the greater the need for contextual cues provided by face-to-face contact. Face-to-face contact is especially important when communicating across disciplines or across cultures where differences in *context* play a critical role in understanding the meaning of a situation (Gundling, 1999; O'Mara, 1999; Kikoski, 1999).

While face-to-face contact brings people together most closely and most immediately, the costs associated with travel and space necessitates the need for organizations to determine when to use this physical resource and when *electronic communication* can be used effectively in lieu of face-to-face interaction (O'Mara, 1999). O'Mara argues that these costs will require managing face-to-face interaction as a distinct and precious resource.

Today new innovative technologies provide information on demand, reservoirs of shared knowledge, and enable real-time communication to transcend boundaries of time and space (McAteer, 1994). Current literature suggests face-to-face communication to

hold the most potential for playing a powerful and influential role in organizations as it relates to leadership, organizational climate, culture and organizational transformation (Gamble & Kelliher, 1999). John Kikoski (1999) lobbies for more research to be done in the area of interpersonal communications and face-to-face interaction as they relate to the growing cultural diversity in the work place. *Communication modes* need to be identified and evaluated for their effectiveness so they may be matched to the varying needs of people who utilize the various modes (Pyle, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what type of information management can effectively communicate with workers through electronic communication to augment face-to-face contact with workers. The study examines these issues from the workers' perception.

Research Questions

The study addresses these research questions:

1. What type of information can be effectively communicated through electronic communication rather than with face-to-face contact from manager to employees?
2. For what type of information is face-to-face contact critical for effective communication to occur between management and workers?
3. For what type of information is electronic communication critical for effective communication to occur between management and workers?

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations of the Study

The study realizes the following assumptions, limitations and delimitations:

Assumptions

1. As value judgements, it was assumed a qualitative approach is a more effective research method for this topic to order to legitimize the authenticity of respondents' answers through social consensus.
2. As a case study, findings can possibly be generalized to other settings where job types and environments are similar.
3. It is assumed for this study that the interview questions yield true and reliable information on the subject being discussed.

Limitations

1. Results were limited to the truthfulness and accuracy of those participants that were interviewed. However the qualitative procedures used in this study emphasized personal constructs of the respondent and did not superimpose categories that have already been established by the investigator (Kupritz, 1996).
2. Data must take into account attitudes and past experiences with technology that may influence the answers given by participants.

Delimitations

1. Data for this study are based on the perceptions only of the participants in this case study.
2. Data for this study are limited to items discussed during the interview on communication, contextual cues, and *technology innovations*.

Operational Definitions

The following terms are defined operationally for the intent of this study and will be used consistently throughout.

1. **Electronic communication-** computer-based communication that allows people to send and receive messages over computers, either across hardwired networks or through modems attached to telephone lines (McAteer, 1994).
2. **Communication-** meaning of information conveyed between the sender and the receiver (Smith, 1966; Hall, 1973).
3. **Context/Contextual cues -** things that provide more than just information. Contextual cues are prompts from the environment, an individual's or group's behavior. Contextual cues do not radically change behavior but provide a subtle hint as to attitudes, feelings or impressions (Clitheroe & Stokols, 1998).
4. **Virtual-**any substitution for face-to-face contact which uses electronic media. Technologies that make the virtual world possible include computers which are part of a network, including those linked to the Internet, and telecommunications, including those used to enhance voice contact such as videoconferencing (O'Mara, 1999).
5. **Communication modes-** physical and tangible way information in a transaction is conveyed in spatial dimension, personal contact, and time, immediacy of reaction and response time (O'Mara, 1999). Modes vary from face-to-face, videoconferencing, phone, voicemail, fax, email, and groupware.
6. **Context-** a specific interdependence or relationship that exists between chosen aspects of a particular environment (Clitheroe & Stokes, 1998).

7. Contexting-the perceptual and cognitive process of recognizing, giving significance to and incorporating contextual cues to interpret the meaning of a situation (Hall, 1983; see also 1966, 1977).
8. Domain – set of categories or groupings organized on the basis of a single semantic association (Kupritz, 1996).
9. Technology innovations - new capital existing in the workforce involving computers, the Internet, email, global paging, video conferencing, telecommunications, networks, groupware, and teleconferencing (Ulrich, 1997).
10. Knowledge management – making information pertinent and reachable through the use of technology in an appropriate manner considering the aspects of finding, selecting, organizing and presenting that information in a way to allow the employee understanding (Brown & Duguid, 2000).
11. Privacy- the regulation of interaction between one's self and others and/or environmental stimuli (Kupritz, 1998).
12. Speech or conversational privacy- one's ability to hold conversations inside a workspace without being overheard and understood by people outside the workspace (Kupritz, 1998).

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Beginning at birth people learn to interpret different segments of communication covering events ranging from a fraction of a second to events spread over many years (Hall, 1973). Edward T. Hall considers language the most technical of all message systems. The most critical aspect of communication is the way in which one reads meaning into what others do or say. Hart and Burks (1972) developed the Theory of Rhetorical Sensitivity that states there is a need for the message sender to adjust the message to the needs of the message receiver.

Communication Theory

Communication has been around since the beginning of humankind. Anytime two or more people come in contact with one another communication is taking place. Individuals should never assume that they are fully aware of what they are communicating to others. The job of achieving understanding through communication is much more difficult than most care to admit (Hall, 1973).

Looking at classic theories of communication, Alfred G. Smith (1966) and D. K. Berlo (1960) provided much of the foundation and framework for which all future communication theories were built. Alfred G. Smith (1966) divided communication into three relevant theoretical approaches that will assist in the understanding of communication: the mathematical approach, the social psychological approach, and the linguistic approach. Human communications can then be divided into three distinct areas:

syntactic, semantic and pragmatic (Smith, 1966). When the three divisions and the three approaches come together they form an organizational matrix for human communication.

The mathematical approach focuses on the electronic signals given during communication. This approach is concerned with the linear transmission of a message, and investigates problems that arise during transmission such as noise and equilibrium. The linguistic anthropologist focuses on the human signals given off during conversation and looks at a broad range of worldwide data stretching from investigating varying languages to codes of human interaction. The social psychologist focuses on the culture present during communication. This approach examines sociological and psychological aspects of language such as group dynamics or spatial relations.

Each of the approaches to communication is based on three divisions of different kinds of relationships present in human communication. Syntactic refers to how signs relate to other signs. For people to communicate they must share a common set of signs. Signs are gestures, words, and other forms of symbolic behavior. Semantics refers to how signs relate to other things. Coding and encoding, the process of giving a shared meaning to gestures or behavior, is a key part of semantics. Pragmatic refers to how signs relate to people. Decoding signs, interpreting human reactions to certain signs, is the major focus of this division (Smith, 1966).

David K. Berlo's (1960) theory of communication divides communication into four distinct levels of communicative interdependence. In this breakdown, he discusses the behavior of communication sources and the behavior of the receivers. Berlo suggests that "the behaviors of the source do not occur independently of the behaviors of the receiver or vice versa (p. 37)". This leads to the belief that sources and receivers are

interdependent. Interdependence is defined as mutual and reciprocal. It should be noted that all levels are present in communication, but the level varies depending on the situation.

The first level is called *Definitional-Physical Interdependence* which states that both the source and receiver depend on each other for their definition and both are physically related to one another. In other words, there is a dependency established, one is waiting on the production of a message while the other waits on the reception of the message. The second level is referred to as *Action-Reaction Interdependence* which states that responses each make are based on the response to the other. Feedback plays a key role in the successful function of this level. The third level is *Interdependence of Expectations*. It suggests the appearance of predictions. At this level, the source and receiver are making predictions on how the other will respond to a message and encode their expectations. The final level is that of *Interaction* that refers to the receiver and the source making inferences about the other. Putting one's self in the other one's shoes is the essence of this level (Berlo, 1960).

In more recent years some researchers are taking a broader look at communication theory incorporating many different disciplines. Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart describe communication as being "situated at the crossroads of several disciplines" with those disciplines mentioned in their research including philosophy, history, geography, psychology, sociology, ethnology, economics, political science, biology, cybernetics and the cognitive sciences (1998). Mattelart and Mattelart go so far as to state that in an attempt to resolve the question of its own scientific legitimacy, the social science field of communication has borrowed scientific models from the natural science areas (1998).

Other researchers in the realm of communication theory expand on classic theories of communication. Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949) created a purely mathematical theory of communication called the transmission model. This model reduces communication to a process of transmitting information and advocates information, when broken down, as measurable. Robert Craig (2000) and Daniel Chandler (1994) use the transmission model as a building block to research deeper into communication.

Craig (2000) determines communication today is more elaborate than the simplistic approach taken by Shannon and Weaver's (1949) transmission model of merely sending words from point A to point B. Craig suggests that trends such as technology, culture, discourse and practice play a role in communication. The transmission model is a building block off which research can begin.

Chandler (1994) examines Shannon and Weaver's (1949) transmission model and determines it has a wider application to human communication than just that of a mathematical or technical one. The transmission model is appealing because of its simplicity, generality and quantifiability. Chandler (1994) identifies the need to incorporate various contexts such as situational, social, institutional, political, cultural, and historical into communication research. Chandler suggests meaning is not independent of context and the medium affects both the form and the content of the message.

Clearly, there are numerous ways to examine communication. No matter the approach taken, the breakdown is the same – there is a sender, a message, and a receiver. A multitude of things can transpire to alter the meaning of the message being sent and

received. With a general understanding of the different approaches and areas of communication having been established, investigation into the modes in which a message is communicated is critical.

Application of Communication Theory to Organizational Communication

Organizations that conduct employee attitude surveys to ask communications questions found employees felt not enough information was shared with them (Ulrich, 1997). Communication is a key component in organizations; yet when employees were polled about the adequacy of communication within their organization, the overwhelming response was – communication is inadequate. Organizations have a variety of systems in place to move information from one location to another: media management, meeting management, public relation departments, and Human Resource systems. Organizational communication is a key employee resource. Technology is a another resource that has provided new ways to remove barriers by aiding in the sharing of information quickly across large geographic areas. Communication programs are becoming critical vehicles to get information to employees. The ability to develop, integrate and use an effective organizational communication system is the core of effective organizations (Ulrich, 1997).

An effective organization communication system also requires accommodation for *privacy* needs (Kupritz, 2000). Privacy research conducted over the past 30 years validates that privacy is an important concern for office workers that should not be overlooked when addressing the needs of an organization and its employees. Classic privacy theories suggest that a main function of privacy is to help maintain one's self-identity by creating personal boundaries (Altman, 1975). Uses of the term privacy in

work environments typically reflect the regulation of interaction, which encompasses retreat from incoming stimulation and outgoing information. People use their control over information and their ability to regulate interaction to gain a temporary limited exchange with others (Sundstrom, 1986).

Altman (1976, 1977) has described privacy as a boundary-regulating process that is dialectic in nature. Privacy regulation is essentially an opening/closing process by which individuals and groups vary in the degree they are available to others. It is a cultural universal: what differs is not whether or not the need for privacy is present but the ways in which that need is met or the ways in which privacy is regulated. There are various combinations that regulating mechanisms operate creating a social system.

Altman (1975) has argued that the most basic privacy need is to enhance social contact through the use of both incoming stimulation and outgoing information and to avoid crowding. Sundstrom (1982) theorizes that the next need may concern mental concentration and the avoidance of distraction, interruption, and noise. Autonomy and *conversational privacy* may become prominent as the third need where neither crowding nor concentration poses problems.

With such vast organizational communications systems in place, the question of the need for face-to-face is ever prevalent. Face-to-face communication between managers and staff has been widely commended as beneficial in organizational communication. Indeed, the evidence shows that managers spend a good deal of their time in face-to-face exchange as part of their role and that the proportion of time spent in this way increases with seniority (Gamble & Kelliher, 1999). Gamble and Kelliher (1999) found that the manager who intermittently used certain nonverbal, contextual cues in

conversations with employees (including touching, smiling, affirmative nodding, direct eye-contact, open posture) was seen by those employees as having expertise, being trustworthy and more persuasive than those managers who did not use the same behaviors. Face-to-face interaction allows for interruption, feedback, and learning to occur, and is found to be most valuable with information that is difficult to verbalize, complex in nature, or when dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity. Furthermore, meetings in-person between managers and workers enable social context cues to be present, which studies have shown to build trust among employees and managers (Scott, 2000). This trust is a critical area in organizational management. A study conducted by Development Dimensions International in 1995 indicated 47 percent of interviewed employees viewed employee trust as a major problem in the work force (Wright, 1996).

The Interrelationship of Information, Context and Meaning

Information shortages lead to managers and employees making decisions based on limited or imperfect information. It is clear that information is critical to every aspect of life. Technology has provided means of sending and receiving information without limitations such as geographic location or rank within an organization. Information can not be defined simply as a self-contained substance. It is impossible to send knowledge and understanding in an electronic communication. Knowledge and understanding are critical to the successful use of information, for without these two keys information is almost useless. The key to an organization's success lies in *knowledge management* and the distribution of that knowledge to employees. For knowledge to be gained there must be a shift from a focus on the information to a focus on the employee and that employee's understanding of the information. Information lies in databases, knowledge lies in

humans. Inevitably there is a shift back towards people and interaction among those people and a shift away from technology and the ability to receive information immediately (Brown & Duguid, 2000). Companies are beginning to see that although information alone will not move them to the top of the industry, but knowledge will.

The role of context to communicate meaning is a powerful yet subtle tool. Review of the literature reveals that the full implications of context to communicate meaning in the workplace are not readily understood. Gundling (1999) describes context as the "core intercultural issue when using communication technologies" (p.30). Table 1 illustrates the degrees of context when used by various forms of communication. Over three decades ago Dr. Edward Hall created the term '*contexting*' to describe the perceptual and cognitive process of recognizing, giving significance to and incorporating contextual cues to interpret the meaning of a situation (1983). Hall debates that information, context and meaning are tied together creating a balanced, functional relationship.

Words, control over format, voice tone, immediate feedback, nonverbal cues (facial expressions and gestures), environmental cues (both social and physical), direct physical exchange (e.g., a handshake), and informal contact (e.g., incidental meeting in the hallway) comprise the many contextual cues workers use to communicate meaning (Gundling, 1999). Another way of looking at modes of communication is to compare the degree of context to the communication mode. *Training and Development* addressed this in 1999 in an article titled, "How to Communicate Globally".

Table 1: *E. Gundling (1999) Table on Degree of Context*

Degree of Context								
		Control			Non-		Direct	
		Over	Voice	Immediate	Verbal	Environmental	Physical	Informal
Communication	Words	Format	Tone	Feedback	Cues	Cues	Cues	Contact
Person to Person								
Video Conferencing								
Phone								
Voicemail								
Fax and Groupware								
Email								

Contextual cues provide information at the conscious and unconscious level (Hall, 1977).

The cues facilitate meaning so that the uses of language can be understood (both verbal and nonverbal) along with the particular situation and circumstances (Gundling, 1999; Hall, 1966, 1983; see also Heath, 1983; Kupritz, 1999; Schein, 1992; Weaver, 1986).

Communication networks today have the ability to stretch from office to office, building to building, state to state and country to country. Organizations must constantly be evaluating the effectiveness of the communication modes utilized and realize that while certain modes provide real time responses there is an ever present sense of distance. This distance is a handicap when it comes to practice, learning, and knowledge sharing (Brown & Duguid, 2000). The use of technological innovations tends to simplify and isolate information which remove much of the context and meaning. A great disservice is done to the message, the sender and receiver if the only aspect taken into account is that of words. When context and meaning are removed from a message only a basic form of communication is taking place (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

Communication Modes at Work

In a world that is changing faster than ever before, it is clear to see the demand for computer technology is ever present. Such technology has become more powerful, affordable, and easier to use. Today organizations are becoming more modular and virtual, also on the rise are joint ventures, strategic partnerships and outsourcing. The overall result of these changes are more resources, greater efficiency, and faster time to market (Scott, 2000).

Electronic communication innovations are being utilized in the highly competitive world of business today. Email is one of the most common computer-based communication tools being used. Email allows the sending and receiving of messages over one's computer, either across hardwired networks or through a modem attached to a telephone line. The use of on-line chat systems is growing. They allow live communication through typed messages through one's computer. Video conferencing is an interactive computer-linked camera that captures images that travel over telephone lines through the existing network to computers. Other forms of technology innovations include fax machines, computer networks, and mobile phones. Each mode is providing communication on some level to someone.

Using technology innovations results in varying effects on communication. In some cases, the mode becomes the message. For example, email users focus their attention on the process of sending the message and forget about any impact there might be on the receiver. The tendency is to concentrate more on the electronic functions – typing, scanning and executing commands – than on how the message will be interpreted (Sussman & Golden, 1991).

Electronic communication directly impacts messages, the sender and the receiver compared to the impact of face-to-face communication. A study conducted in 1997 indicated communication was more credible when face-to-face conversations were utilized, and ample opportunities were provided for feedback to questions (Faulkner & Gray, 1997). An article in *The Corporate Board* discusses the fact that informal, verbal communications tend to be more convincing to most employees than controlled routes of communication (Spaeth, 1995). In a study conducted in 1995, respondents expressed a strong preference for immediate, face-to-face, two-way communication over publications such as company newsletter or bulletins (Berger, 1995).

O'Mara (1999) highlights modes of transactions as they pertain to interpersonal distance and immediacy of response. Figure 1 represents the modes of transaction present in the 1970's. Figure 2 represents the modes of transaction present in the 1990's (O'Mara, 1999). While modes of communication continue to increase in sophistication and complexity, face-to-face communication remains the most personal and immediate of all forms of communication.

Time can be defined by immediacy. Modes of communication will vary in the immediacy of the response to a message. Face-to-face will allow for a response within mere seconds, while an email response is dependent on the sender being able to get to a computer and send a message and the receiver being at a computer to receive the message and respond to it. Face-to-face allows constant and immediate responses from the sender and receiver. Electronic mail messages allows periodic contact and delays in the responses from sender and receiver.

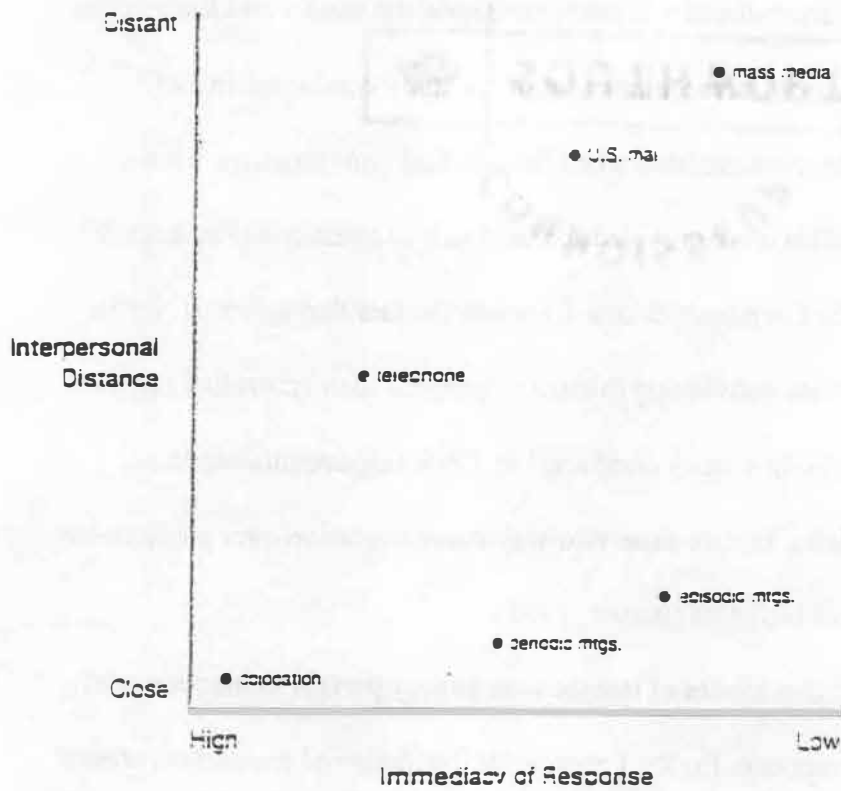


Figure 1: Modes of Transaction, Circa 1970's

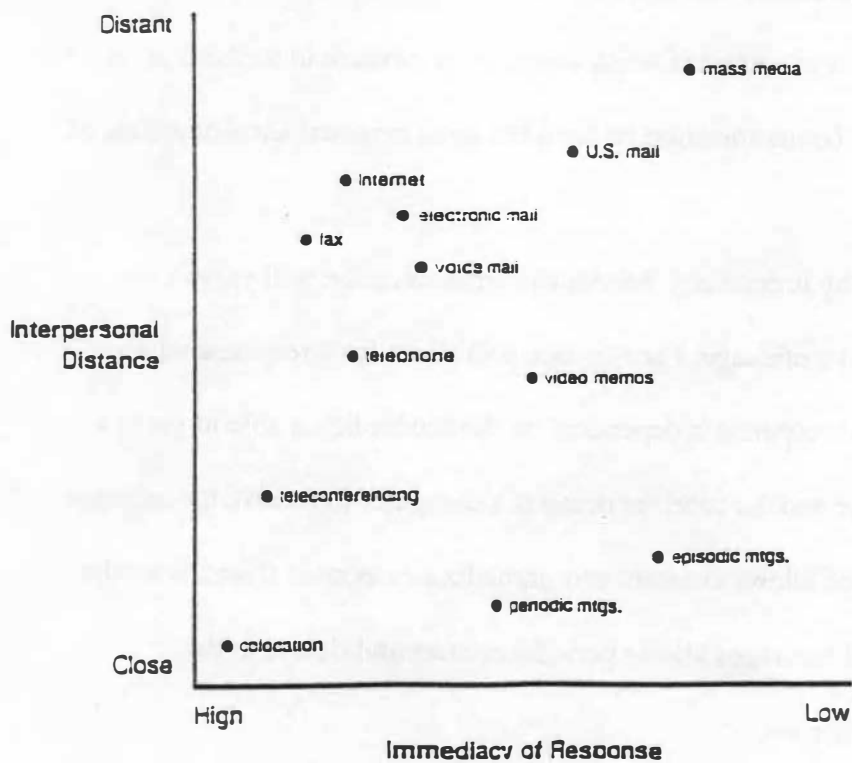


Figure 2: Modes of Transaction, Circa 1990's

O'Mara views face-to-face contact as the "most personal and immediate way of transacting business." In a business setting, certain situations are more productive when face-to-face contact is utilized, such as product development processing and research where ideas to flow freely, engineers working on projects, sales and service with customers especially early on, and employee education and training. Questions, feedback and collaboration are more productive face-to-face versus electronic communication.

Each mode is different as it relates to time and space. Face-to-face is immediate and close. A letter is lengthy in time and can cover a great distance. A fax is immediate and can cover a great distance. Voice mail can range from somewhat timely to lengthy in time and can range from close in distance to a vast distance. These are just a few modes used in the world today. Each has a unique set of characteristics and varies in immediacy and distance.

Several studies have been conducted examining the social responses to communication technologies. It has been found that individuals will apply similar social rules and expectations to a computer as if it was a real person. Participants perceived interaction taking place with the computer (Sundar & Nass, 2000). This is not a new phenomenon. In 1956, Horton and Wohl examined the parasocial relationship between humans and televisions. They determined that there was a psychological orientation present between the source and the receiver (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Nass and Moon conducted research and determined that people view computers as the source in communication rather than the mode (2000).

O'Mara (1999) contends that while face-to-face contact provides the most personal and immediate way of transacting business, it is more costly than other communication modes.

O'Mara argues that face-to-face contact should be allocated to serve those communications that bring the greatest value to the organization. These costs necessitate the need for organizations to determine when to use this physical resource and when electronic communication can be used effectively in lieu of face-to-face interaction (O'Mara, 1999).

Face-to-face provides the most contextual cues to communicate meaning and is the most personal (O'Mara, 1999). The need for face-to-face contact in the workplace depends upon how much personal contact is required by the work process and depends upon the particular situation and circumstances. For example, Levi examined American worker perceptions of virtual offices, to determine if physical space was still relevant (Smith & McCoy, 1999). Findings determined that preferences for different communication modes used for receiving important organizational information reflected the different group beliefs about management. Groups that did not trust management preferred face-to-face interaction. Groups that trusted management wanted their information via email or written. Levi concluded, "Creative and collaborative work can be supported by communication technologies, but the physical environment also is needed for building social relationships, providing training and support, and dealing with communication problems" (p. 12).

People communicate in as many different ways as there are different people.

Alfred Smith (1966) states, "The way people communicate is the way they live. It is their culture" (p. 1). Face-to-face interaction, the most common form of communication for many years, it can be used as a prototype to evaluate the forms of communication that are growing in popularity today. Three features are apparent in face- to-face

communications: facial expression, meaningful non-verbal acts such as gestures and touches, and instantaneous collaboration (Bavelas & Hutchinson, 1997).

Today the major modes used in communicating range from face-to-face, email, voicemail, video conferencing, newsletters, bulletin boards, and on-line chats. Each of these modes sends out cues from the sender to the receiver within the message. Does the mode of communication affect the message, the sender and the receiver?

Previous research indicates employees see informal, verbal communications as a more convincing form of communication (Spaeth, 1995). Also expressed were preferences for immediate, face-to-face, two-way communication instead of organizational publications (Berger, 1995). However, clearly that the world is changing and with that change, embracing new ways of performing tasks and communicating messages. Email, video-conferencing, instant messaging and mobile phones are all innovations that effect the way daily tasks are carried out. The question that must remain at the top of managers' minds is how does the mode affect the message? For managers and businesses to remain competitive, knowing the answer to this question is not enough; action must be taken to ensure all communication is effective no matter the mode utilized. As technologies become more and more a part of our lives, assumptions about how to use technology need to be challenged so that technology is adding value (McAteer, 1994).

Looking at the information presented, one can see a variety of degrees of context being used in the workforce. It is becoming increasingly important for businesses to address the changes taking place concerning modes of communication. Few studies have addressed this issue. Literature is scarce on the effect of modes on messages being sent

and received. As technology innovations challenge businesses to keep up with changes, employers must address the impact these changes will have on employees and the way they send and receive information.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This section describes the study participants, sample size, trustworthiness of data, and procedures followed in collecting and analyzing data.

Participants

Purposeful sampling for this case study was used to identify twenty-four office workers whose communication with higher management was through email and face-to-face interaction. A structured interview was conducted with each of the twenty-four workers whose sample size supports information richness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and the saturation of data or redundancy (Patton, 1990). There is redundancy when subsequent responses to questions do not provide additional thoughts.

All twenty-four office workers were employed at a major bank in the United States. The bank has over 600 branches spread over seven states. Interviews were conducted with employees at the same bank who maintain similar job functions within the company. This organization relies heavily on electronic communication due to the vast physical space between branches and headquarters and the immediate need for information to be forwarded to those locations.

Using a “typical sampling” strategy (Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994), participants were sought who held professional positions, reported to higher management located within the same office facility as the participants, and had been in their current positions for at least six months. The general work responsibilities of these office workers entailed facilitating branch sales activities and providing exceptional

customer service, and recognizing and meeting customer needs by proactively selling and cross-selling bank products and services. Work responsibilities also included handling daily operational issues, meeting consumer lending needs, being aware of and taking security precautions at all times and generating new consumer and business customer business.

Trustworthiness of Data

The structured interviews emphasized personal constructs of respondents to establish authenticity and trustworthiness through the nature and format of the questions asked, followed by content analysis techniques (see Denzin, 1978; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Interview questions were designed to exhaust the range of respondent perceptions about the variables being examined to decrease the likelihood of overlooking significant chunks of a *domain* (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999; Spradley, 1979, 1980). The questions asked avoided “referential meaning” by asking for “use through contrast, similarity, uniqueness, and the ideal in an effort to exhaust a domain” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999; Spradley, 1979, 1980).

A pilot study was conducted with office workers from the same target population as the participants in the study to determine content validity and appropriateness of the interview questions. Refinements were made to some of the questions for better clarity and to strengthen the interview process. As part of the pilot study, the office workers also shared with the investigators their personal constructs for the word “productive” which was a crucial word used in the interview questions. Workers defined “productive” as “producing”; “completing a job or task in a productive manner”; “to move forward”; “doing your job in a competent, efficient and accurate manner”; “to effectively use time

and resources that are available to complete a desired task in the shortest time possible”; “to do quality work in a timely manner”; “generating work in a successful and timely way”; “completing a task in an efficient amount of time”. Prior to the official interview, each participant reviewed these constructs for accuracy to ensure a shared meaning of language. Respondents agreed that the descriptions accurately conveyed the meaning of “productive.”

After content analysis, cumulative frequencies for similar types of items and attributes were calculated to determine how often similar types were elicited. This allowed the investigators to determine included terms elicited most frequently and to gain a better understanding about the distribution of beliefs across domain categories. Linking qualitative and quantitative data enables confirmation and corroboration of both through triangulation (Rossman and Wilson, 1991), and helps investigators “see the general drift of the data more easily and rapidly by looking at distributions” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 253).

Two of the investigators independently analyzed the data with each item and attribute represented in some domain category. No discrepancies were noted between the two analyses when they compared. Domain categories and tentative assertions were then reviewed for accuracy by participants, who gave positive feedback. Peers examined the tentative interpretations as well and gave constructive comments. Conducting member checks and peer examination in this manner helps to strengthen authenticity and trustworthiness of findings (Creswell, 1994; Meriam, 1998).

Data Collection Procedures

Dr. Virginia Kupritz, Associate Professor at The University of Tennessee, developed the research instrument for this study. Structured interviews were conducted with each office worker over a thirty to sixty minute interval. The interviews were conducted in a private conference room with only the participant and interviewer present. Responses were recorded verbatim so that the language and conceptualizations of those involved were preserved (Spradley, 1979, 1980). The six interview questions covered a range of topics about work information (addressing situations and circumstances) that management can effectively communicate through email to augment face-to-face interaction with workers. Three of these questions are presented here to illustrate the nature and format of the questions used in this study: What type of information is as productive to receive by email as face-to-face contact with management? What type of information is not as productive to receive by email as face-to-face contact with management? What type of information is absolutely critical to receive through face-to-face contact from management rather than email?

Data Analysis

The investigators conducted domain analyses employing content analysis procedures (see Spradley, 1979). These analyses involved sorting through interview responses and identifying patterns, categories, or themes. A tabular worksheet was developed that displayed semantic relationships. A domain is a set of categories organized on the basis of a single semantic relationship (for example, *X* is a kind of *Y*; *X* is a way to do *Y*). Possible cover terms and included terms (that is, items and attributes) that appropriately fit the semantic relationships were searched for in the data. Making

systematic use of this kind of worksheet helps to uncover domains embedded in the interview responses (Spradley, 1979). For example, included terms dealing with sensitive, confidential matters were grouped under the same cover term: “type of information that is absolutely critical to receive from management through face-to-face contact.” Each item and attribute included under this cover term fit the semantic relationship *X* (for example, personal issues) is a type of *Y* (information that is absolutely critical to receive from management through face-to-face contact). A system of cultural meanings was uncovered that these office workers use to denote and connote work information that management can effectively communicate through email to augment face-to-face interaction with workers.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Results of the study are presented here.

Email in Lieu of Face-to-Face Contact

One-hundred percent of the responses indicated that all the information communicated from management was as productive to received by email as through face-to-face contact. The information workers received from management through email dealt with operational issues, project updates, security (safety) concerns, and sales information. No responses were elicited about confidential or sensitive information being communicated by email from management. The following verbatim responses reflect common descriptions given by workers for information that is as productive to receive by email as through face-to-face contact with management: “Definitely meeting information.” “Update information (scorecard).” “All of it – absolutely.” “All of it.” “All of it is productive through email.”

Critical Face-to-Face Contact

Elicited responses indicated that the bank employees receive a vast amount of information from managers. Critical work situations require face-to-face communication in the opinions of the 24 respondents. Table 2 reports the cumulative frequencies computed for critical work situations that require face-to-face communication.

Table 2: *Frequency Count for Critical Work Situations Requiring Face-to-Face Communication*

Domain category	Item and attribute grouping	Frequency
Critical work situations requiring face-to-face contact from management	Human Resource confidential issues (reviews, promotions, discipline, legal concerns)	42
	Problems that are too complicated or need to see in order to handle	2
	Interaction with management	5
	Branch information (Scorecard/sales)	5
	Complaints problems	4
	Customer information	2
	Robbery	1

Human Resource confidential issues including annual reviews, discipline, and promotions elicited the most frequent response from participants when asked to identify critical work situations requiring face-to-face communication. The following verbatim responses reflect common descriptions given by workers for critical work situations requiring face-to-face communication: “I want face-to-face when it comes to Human Resources issues.” “I never want confidential information on email about me personally or customers.” “That is easy, definitely discipline concerns or actions I want face-to-face.” “I want to actually talk to someone about personnel issues.” “I want my review done in person.” “If I am getting fired.” “Really the only thing that sticks out is performance issues – good or bad.” “If there were legal concerns.” “I don’t want to get

sensitive information through email.” “I don’t ever want to discuss my performance through email.” “Highly personal stuff.”

Critical Email Contact

Certain critical work situations require email communication for employees such as occasions when management must get information to employees and face-to-face communication is not possible or needed. Security (safety) information from headquarters needs to get to every branch and would take days for someone to personally deliver the message. Corporate headquarters houses large sums of information that must be communicated to employees in order for them to perform their jobs. The responses revealed that information not perceived as confidential— meeting times, training times, policy changes, system problems, and things with numerous details—were just as productive and even critical to receive quickly. Table 3 reports the cumulative frequencies computed for critical work situations requiring email from managers.

Workers identified two main situations where it is critical for workers to receive electronic mail from managers: security (safety) issues, and policy and product changes. The following verbatim responses reflect common descriptions given by workers for critical work situations requiring email communication: “Branch alerts.” “Early morning system hits are important to get to ASAP.” “System issues have to be through email because we can’t wait for someone to tell us stuff in person – it would be too late.” “Product changes are critical.” “Special product promotions and product updates.” “Changes that are immediate.”

Table 3: *Frequency Count for Critical Work Situations Requiring Email*

Domain category	Item and attribute grouping	Frequency
Critical work situations requiring email from management	Security (safety) issues	21
	Branch information	4
	Personnel issues	1
	Questions and things that need immediate attention	3
	System problems/issues	2
	Policy and product changes	8
	Agendas/meeting/training/contest information	6
	Things that need to be documented	1
	Information when there are lots of details	2

CHAPTER V

Implications and Discussion

The findings indicate that a clear need for both face-to-face communication in certain work situations and a need for electronic mail messages in specific work situations with management exists at the bank. The study revealed work situations in which information from management to employee is best transferred through face-to-face communication and situations in which information from managers to employee is best transferred through electronic mail. Results indicate employees preferred to receive private information that is personal, sensitive or confidential in a face-to-face format. However, an equal amount of work situations exist in which employees preferred to receive information in electronic mail. Information that is concrete or needs to be in the hands of bank employees quickly is productive transmitted through email such as security information, meeting times, or training dates.

Interviews with the respondents indicate this bank is applying the use of email and face-to-face communication appropriately. When asked about the types of email received from managers, respondents reported they did not receive any confidential information in an electronic mail format. Workers receive critical information using the appropriate medium of face-to-face communication when the topic relates to performance or human resource concerns, and email when the topic relates to security or product and policy information.

Realizing in today's workforce time is critical and space is vast, face-to-face interactions can be luxuries. Bank employees are spread over many states and receive

messages from management from several lines of business. Face-to-face communication is not always possible without investing large sums of time and money. Weighing the factors of time and space with employees' need for face-to-face communication is one of the largest challenges managers face today.

The study indicated employees were very clear that face-to-face communication was critical when issues dealt with confidential matters considered private. The study supports the need for privacy as it relates to human resource issues, personal or confidential information and performance reviews. This finding is consistent with the importance of privacy needs for the organization and its employees (Kupritz, 2000).

With regard to communication, research indicates face-to-face contact allows for questions, feedback and interpreting contextual cues which enable an employee to find meaning in the message. It is not surprising employees want to find meaning in a message being sent from their manager, especially at times when feedback on performance or other sensitive information is being shared. Organizations must be careful to evaluate when face-to-face communication is desired and when other modes of communication are equally effective.

Participants in the study indicate email communication is not only acceptable but critical in certain situations. Security alerts must be communicated quickly to all branch employees. Face-to-face communication would be impossible, but email messages are not only possible, but virtually instantaneous. Email messages are also acceptable in employees' opinions when no meaning is to be gathered from a message such as, "the staff meeting is on Tuesday at 2 pm." The message will not enhance trust or credibility nor is it personal or confidential.

The bank appears to have synthesized the use of both modes of communication effectively noting the needs and use for both forms. Employees responded that there are very specific times that face-to-face communication is the only mode of communication that will be productive. The bank managers do not send information that is private through email, but rather handle such matters with face-to-face communication. The opposite side of the coin is those same employees responded there are equally as many times that email is the only mode of communication that will be productive.

In today's workforce where technology innovations are perceived as the way to stay in the lead in most industries, the effective use of face-to-face communication and the knowledge management that goes with the use of this mode may actually be the key to success. Bank employees in this study are spread out over different states and still maintain the same banking standards from location to location. This is possible through all the advances in technological innovations today. O'Mara (1999) argues that electronic communication, transmitted in seconds, should be used effectively to augment face-to-face contact which will be treated as a precious resource in the near future.

The bank in this study has the edge over organizations that put all of their resources in technology with no regard to the type of information being transferred from manager to worker. This bank is using the knowledge that confidential Human Resource issues need face-to-face contact while other business information is best served in email. Certain private information will continue to be best served face-to-face. As this bank grows, managers need to continue to value their use of face-to-face contact and use this resource when appropriate and keep careful watch over this precious resource.

As a case study, the findings in this investigation cannot be generalized to all organizations or office settings due to external reliability and validity. The nature of this field setting has dynamic, changing contexts that make replication in similar social settings difficult. This study provides a beginning knowledge base for future research. The details gained from this initial study warrants further studies that examine the critical need for both face-to-face and email communication with managers. Future studies should examine privacy issues related to human resource issues and their relationship with the need for face-to-face communications. It may be that organizations similar in size and disbursement may value face-to-face communication as productive in similar situations but it may reveal different needs for face-to-face communication with managers. Finally, action-oriented research is needed that investigates when face-to-face communication within an organization will enhance knowledge as well as the effective use of information as it is transferred from management to workers.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A:

Instrument

General statement about your project:

"I am examining work circumstances and situations that management uses email and face-to-face contact with you at work."

GENDER _____

DOB _____

COMPANY _____
DEPARTMENT _____
JOB TITLE _____

PHYSICAL LOCATION
OF WORKSPACE
WITHIN COMPANY _____

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION
OF WORKSPACE

Floor to ceiling – solid walls and doors
5 foot partitions with door
5 foot partitions without door
7 foot partitions with door
7 foot partitions without door
Open area no partitions for doors

DESCRIBE TRAVEL
REQUIREMENTS
FOR JOB _____

[FRAME OF REFERENCE TO SHARE WITH RESPONDENTS]

"I WILL BE ASKING YOU SOME QUESTIONS USING THE WORD 'PRODUCTIVE' IN MY QUESTIONS. FOR THESE QUESTIONS, 'PRODUCTIVE' HAS BEEN DEFINED BY OUR CO-WORKERS AS MEANING SEVERAL DIFFERENT THINGS.

PLEASE READ THIS LIST AND CHECK THE DEFINITIONS THAT MEAN PRODUCTIVE TO YOU AS WELL.

WHAT ELSE DOES PRODUCTIVE MEAN TO YOU?"

PRODUCING
COMPLETING A JOB OR TASK IN A PRODUCTIVE MANNER
TO MOVE FORWARD
DOING YOUR JOB IN A COMPETENT, EFFICIENT AND ACCURATE MANNER
TO EFFECTIVELY USE TIME AND RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO COMPLETE A
DESIRED TASK IN THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE
TO DO QUALITY WORK IN A TIMELY MANNER
GENERATING WORK IN A SUCCESSFUL AND TIMELY WAY
COMPLETEING A TASK IN AN EFFICIENT AMOUNT OF TIME

1. What are the different kinds of things you do, try to do, or try to get done in your office?
2. Now – I'd like to explore the type of work information management emails you and the circumstances surrounding it. What type of information does management email you? (ANS="X". PROBE – What other types of information, other than "X", does management email you? (ANS="Y")
3. Of "X" and "Y", which type of information is as productive to receive by email as f2f contact with management?
4. Of "X" and "Y", which type of information is not productive to receive by email as f2f contact with management?
5. Under what work situations or circumstances is receiving information from management through f2f contact absolutely critical? (ANS=X) Probe – Under what other work situations or circumstances, other than "X", is receiving information from management through f2f contact absolutely critical?
6. Under what work situations or circumstances is receiving information from management through email absolutely critical? (ANS=X) Probe – Under what other work situations or circumstances, other than "X", is receiving information from management through email absolutely critical?

APPENDIX B:

Domain Analysis

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I get operations reports together and review them - I handle customer complaints - Try to meet my scorecard goals by bringing in new business - I have to get annuity sales - Enter new accounts in the system - Deal with customers - I have to handle critical customer service issues daily - I have to check my email throughout the day - I have to produce, I guess more like get new business such as investments, new accounts and loans - I do stuff like deal with customers and commercial accounts - I also handle operational issues - The biggest things I do are pull reports and balance general ledger accounts - Deal with customer service issues - Basically, I wait on customers and provide great customer service - Try to get points for scorecard - Help out with specific events - I do account maintenance - Loan applications - Pull reports - I also deal with paperwork exceptions - Do tons of tele-consulting - Try is the key word – reports - Get money to go out - ATM - Wait on customers and make sure things run smoothly - Maintenance on accounts - AmSouth At Work leads - Answer email - Provide customer service - Most of the time I deal with customer service issues - Make annuity calls and HELOC calls 	is a type of	job activity and responsibility

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You know sales and new accounts make up the rest of the day - I try to get loans booked - Work on making sure customer paperwork is correct - Deal with different departments on getting loans through the system - I mainly deal with safe deposit boxes - New accounts - Answering the phone - Of course, customer service - Here is a general list – I pull reports - Provide great customer service - Troubleshoot operational issues all day most days - The big stuff is customer service - Of course, reports - Referrals - I mainly deal with panic calls from customers, you know customers with account problems - I deal with problems in general - Of course, sales - Teller line issues - I guess I make and take phone calls - Open new accounts - Of course, I am responsible for tele-consulting - Get HELOCs - I have to provide customer service - Do lots of troubleshooting on existing accounts - I make annuity calls and CD calls to help customers grow their accounts with us - First thing is to pull reports - Wait on customers - Get referrals for new accounts - Pending research on customer issues - Calls on new products - Customer service - I'll just give you an overall list – open new accounts - Get HELOCs - Get BRPs 		

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fix customer problems. That about sums up my day. - In the morning I deal with the safe deposit boxes - Then we open and I deal with customers and provide customer service and handle customer issues - Get referrals for new accounts - Well, sales opportunities - View customer accounts, maintenance work on accounts - Check orders - Try to cross sell - Organize my work - I deal with policy issues - Customer accounts when there are problems - Work towards meeting scorecard numbers - I deal with customers and customer service issues, fix accounts when there is a problem - Of course, work towards scorecard 		

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I get emails on operational issues - Meetings - Training - Teller referrals - Branch alerts come through email too - I get emails on product champions updates - Information on conference calls - I get emails on scorecard numbers - Project updates - I also get informal emails from my boss just asking "How are you doing?" - I get emails on meetings and their times - Early morning system hits - I get sales tips - Lists of prospective annuity calls - We also get teller referrals - Branch alerts throughout the day - Of course, training information and dates for classes - I get emails on success stories like when someone does something extra good - We get lots of emails on meetings - Training - I get tons of email, mainly on scorecard results or updates - Meeting announcements - Training information - Problems - Other things like alerts - Operational issues - I guess you mean branch alerts - Investment documents - Stuff like operational problems - I get emails about doing a good job, you know, "way to go" - Management emails me about area contests - Meetings - Goals - General updates - They're about alerts 	is a type of	information that managers email direct reports

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forgeries - Things I have to do or things that are going on - Stuff on training - Mainly I get rates - Meeting information – you know – time, date, location - Contest are announced through email - We get referrals - Annuity sales tips - Rates - Procedures – new ones and ones that are revised - Alerts too - I get mail on meeting notifications - Overall bank information like status reports and other bank/branch numbers - I get stuff on customer accounts - Loan information - Meetings - We get alerts - All kinds of scheduling information – like-vacations and stuff - We get documentation information on operations issues - We get emails on meetings - Changes in policy - Reminders on upcoming events and blitzes - I get emails on training updates - That is an easy questions – alerts - Weekly branch reports - Branch rankings - HR stuff - Training - Procedures - We receive AIS updates - Annuity updates - BRP leads - I also get emails on when conference calls like HELOC champions will be - Alerts - I get alerts - Funds reports 		

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market information - Lots of memos announcing call parties - I also get announcements on our top producers - Changes in products - Scorecard stuff - Mainly on meetings - Changes to policy - Then the alerts - We get alerts - AIS stuff - The top 20 producers - Reports on administrative stuff - I get emails on weekly production on Thursdays - They send out alerts - Of course all the contest stuff that we do - Stuff like changes in policy - Meetings - Security information - We also get lots of alerts - I get notices of annuity sales - I get emails from underwriters - Emails about campaigns - Alerts - I get emails on policy stuff - Area meetings - Conference call reminders - Training stuff - Scorecard updates - We get emails on changes in policy - Training updates - Alerts 		

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are all great through email - All of it is good through email - All of it is productive through email - Pretty much all of it is productive through emails - Definitely meeting information and - Update information (scorecard) - Its all productive - I think all of it is - All of it is productive on email - Pretty much all are productive to get in an email - All of it - All of it – absolutely - Guess it is all good through email - It is all productive - All - It is the best way to get all of this information - All - Really all of it is - All of it - All of it except the top producers report – I don't really care about it - I guess all of it is productive is you think about it - Pretty much all of it is productive - All of it - All - All of it pretty much 	is a type of	information that is as productive to receive by email as face to face contact with management

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None - None - None - None of it really is not productive - None I guess. Pretty much all of it is better through email - None really - I don't think any if it is not productive in email - None really 	is a type of	information that is not productive to receive by email as face to face contact with management

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I want face to face when it comes to Human Resources issues - When problems are too complicated to handle in email - If it is something I need to see or get a signature on - Definitely on annual reviews - Any information that is personal or of a personal nature - I don't want to get sensitive information through email - I want my annual review done in person - I also want to be coached by my boss face to face - Some sales blitz announcements should be in person because they contain too much details and I tend not to read it all - I want my review to be face to face - I don't ever want to discuss my performance through an email - I guess anything that HR is involved in should be in person - That is easy, definitely discipline concerns or actions I want face to face - Also stuff like a pat on the back - HR issues - I want to actually talk to someone about personnel issues - My review - Complaints or problems that involve me - I want information on promotions, demotions and being fired in person - I want my review done in person - I think staff changes - Individual expectations should be done in person - I don't want complaints or problems - If I was doing something incorrectly - Personal stuff - Stuff like my review - Reprimands - Personal stuff 	is a type of	work situation or circumstance that receiving information from management through face to face contact is absolutely critical.

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think we need to get feedback face to face - Reviews need to be face to face too - That it was my last day - I don't want anything bad – like bad news in email - Incorrect information on customers - I don't want to be disciplined through email - I never want to get confidential information on email about me personally or customers - Anything of a personal nature - HR issues - Negative news or information should be in person - Really the only thing that sticks out is performance issues – good or bad - I think personal feedback needs to be face to face - Also development and HR issues should not be done on email - You know important stuff like your review - Personal stuff - I also think greetings need to be in person - If I am getting fired - Problems with me of any sort that should be one on one - Absolutely scorecard goals - I guess stuff about your performance - I want scorecard details face to face it gives me a chance to talk about what I think I can do - Also exceptions you know details on fixing mistakes and problems - Personal stuff to me or if I've done something wrong - Also my review - If there was a robbery - If there were legal concerns - Morning rallies we should be together - Quarterly goals need to be talked about together - Highly personal stuff - HR stuff - Anything personal - Or related to personnel issues 		

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Branch alerts - Scorecard results are needed on email - I also think it is important to documents personnel issues - Anything that you handle immediately or needs my attention soon - Branch alerts - Early morning hits are important to get to ASAP - Also, teller referrals because we have to handle them within 48 hours - Alerts - System problems have to be in email - Branch alerts - System issues have to be through email because we can't wait for someone to tell us stuff in person – it would be too late - It is critical we get branch alerts - Rate changes - Operational changes immediately and email make that possible - Alerts and updates are critical to get in email - Alerts - Agendas are important to get quickly - Security information - Rates are needed daily and quickly - Meeting information that concerns me - Of course ,we need the referrals quick - Anything that needs to be documented - Alerts - Stuff where there are lots of details - When dealing with corporate in Birmingham and need questions answered ASAP - Really , alerts are the only critical thing - Alerts are really the only critical thing we have to have a heads up on security stuff - Urgent stuff like alerts is all that is critical - Stuff that needs my immediate attention - Rankings that important to me because I want to know where I am 	is a type of	work situation or circumstance that receiving information from management through email is absolutely critical

INCLUDED TERM	SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIP	COVER TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alerts - Product updates are critical - Rate changes - Special product promotions and product updates - Alerts are really the only critical thing - Changes that are immediate - Alerts too - Alerts there isn't much else - Training information - Contest information - Stuff I need the details on ahead of time - Only alerts - Alerts - Also, campaigns when there are lots of details - Conference call information and reminders - Policy changes - Alerts are critical we receive ASAP - Alerts - Policy changes are the only critical thing 		

APPENDIX C:

Frequency Count

Domain category	Item and attribute grouping	Frequency
Type of email received from managers	Operational issues and problems	5
	Meetings, training, conference call, policy, project and product update information	41
	Security issues (Branch alerts)	19
	Scorecard goals/results/updates	5
	Informal emails "How are you?"	2
	Sales and investment sales tips	6
	Area contests/blitzes/campaigns	6
	Things I need to do	1
	Bank information and reports	14
	Customer accounts, loan information and documentation	6
	Scheduling (Vacations)	1
	HR information	1

Domain category	Item and attribute groupings	Frequency
Productive work information received from managers	All work information perceived as productive	22
	Meeting information	1
	Scorecard update information	1
	All except the top producers report	1

Domain category	Item and attribute grouping	Frequency
Critical work situations requiring face to face contact from management	Human Resource confidential issues (reviews, promotions, discipline, legal concerns)	42
	Problems that are too complicated or need to see in order to handle	2
	Interaction with management	5
	Branch information (Scorecard/sales)	5
	Complaints problems	4
	Customer information	2
	Robbery	1

Domain category	Item and attribute grouping	Frequency
Critical work situations requiring email from management	Security (safety) issues	21
	Branch information	4
	Personnel issues	1
	Questions and things that need immediately attention	3
	System problems/issues	2
	Policy and product changes	8
	Agendas/meeting/training/contest information	6
	Things that need to be documented	1
	Information when there are lots of details	2

VITA

Jennifer Leigh Mills was born in Memphis, Tennessee, the oldest child of Marvin and Carolyn Mills. Jennifer spent her youth in Ringgold, GA.

Ms. Mills holds an associate's degree from Oxford College of Emory University. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1995 from Tennessee Technological University. Prior to attending the University of Tennessee she worked in the field of Corporate Training and Development.

In March 2000, Jennifer was accepted into the University of Tennessee's Graduate School where she has pursued a Master of Science degree in Human Resource Development, for which this thesis is the final requirement. Ms. Mills plans remain open to opportunities that afford her the advancement in either training and development or human resources.